

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska Department of Administration Division of Personnel

To: Administrative Service Directors
Human Resource Managers

Date: September 16, 2002

From: Sharon Barton, Director

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Subject: HR Classification Study
Labor Relations Analysts

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Attached herewith are the final class specifications for the new Labor Relations Analyst series. The class specifications are effective September 1, 2001.

HISTORY

The State of Alaska and the Confidential Employees Association entered into Letter of Agreement (LOA) 01-KK-048 as part of the 2000 – 2003 collective bargaining agreement. The LOA required the State to conduct a classification study of Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. The study was to include, but was not limited to, the following job classes:

Human Resource Manager I, II, III
Personnel Officer I, II
Personnel Specialist I, II, III
Personnel Assistant I, II
Employee Resource Consultant Specialist
Employee Resource Consultant Manager
Labor Relations Specialist I, II, III
Personnel Manager I, II

The Labor Management Committee (LMC) established by the contract identified the following problems and concerns to be addressed:

Personnel Assistant I:

- Difficulty exists in recruitment and in the interpretation of the qualifications.

Human Resource Managers:

- Range 19 (HRM I) is obsolete.
- Criteria established at all levels to not seem realistic distinctions of complexity.
- Is this a separate job class series or an extension of the Personnel Officer?
- The level of influence on department/"change element" influence.

Salary Ranges for all HR jobs:

- New factors – delegation and federal mandates
- Retention and recruitment
- Increased liability

Career Tracks:

- Generalist vs. Specialist positions
- Inequity
- No range 16 exists in the generalist – either as a technician or entry professional.

Centralized vs. Delegated:

- Equity in job classes available
- Overtime exemption inequity

The Department of Administration solicited bids to conduct the study and develop new class specifications. A contract was awarded under the procurement rules and the contractor met with the Committee several times, held group interviews with selected incumbents, and produced draft specifications. After several unsuccessful attempts to improve the quality of the work product, the State cancelled the contract. A Working Group composed of the union members of the LMC and several Division of Personnel (DOP) staff members began anew and completed work on the study. The State contracted with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) to study the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The consultant interviewed the incumbents and issued a report and recommendations to the Director of Personnel in July 2002.

All Position Descriptions (PDs) were read and reviewed. A list of duty statements representative of the various HR functional areas and levels of work was developed and distributed to the Human Resource Managers (HRMs). The HRMs categorized the tasks as clerical, technical, or administrative. Responses from each department were compiled and reviewed; the Working Group assigned the category when there was no consensus among the department responses.

Teams of interviewers from the Division of Personnel and the departments conducted position interviews with the incumbents of most positions in the departments and in DOP. The results of the interviews were reported to the Working Group and used, along with the PDs and function lists, to develop and clarify the class specifications.

The consultant interviewed all Human Resource Managers and Personnel Managers as planned, and requested additional interviews with the Classification Manager and the Employee Programs Manager. From those interviews and from information supplied by each department, the consultant prepared a report of findings to the Director of Personnel.

The LMC and the Division of Personnel hosted a briefing in late July at which CPS consultant Rick McWilliams presented his report and recommendations regarding the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager class series. Draft specifications were distributed for the other human resource series included in the study. Reallocation of positions in classifications covered by the study was suspended effective August 1, 2002, to allow for completion and implementation of the study.

A formal comment period followed the briefing during which departments were invited to make specific remarks and suggestions about all but the Human Resource Manager, Human Resource Officer and Personnel Manager job classes. All comments were collected by the Division of Personnel and forwarded to the Working Group, which considered and made a determination regarding each recommendation. Reports summarizing these decisions will be distributed to agencies following implementation of Phase One. While the comment period was underway, two general meetings were held to discuss questions raised by agency representatives. The first meeting addressed the technical series; the second meeting addressed the professional series. Both meetings were well attended, with representation from most departments.

Whereas Phase I of the study was scheduled for implementation on September 16, 2002, the Working Group imposed a deadline of August 1, 2002, for revised PDs to be considered part of the study.

Following revision of the class specifications based on the comments received and the further deliberations of the Working Group, three test allocation sessions were held. Definitions and Distinguishing Characteristics for the following classes were considered: Human Resource Assistant, Human Resource Technician I-III, Payroll Supervisor, Human Resource Specialist I-III, and Human Resource Officer. The Working Group considered the issues raised in the test allocations and made final revisions to the class specifications. In addition, the Working Group concluded that it needed additional information in order to resolve questions about work performed by positions that provide professional human resource services exclusively to specific divisions or regions, as well as those that act as “seconds” or “assistants” to Human Resource Managers. The Working Group determined that action on the individual positions should be deferred to Phase Two, that audits should be conducted, and that final action on class specifications occur in conjunction with the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The recommendation was forwarded to the LMC.

The Working Group finalized the class specifications and presented its work product and recommendations to the full LMC on September 3, 2002. At that meeting the Working Group recommended that positions providing comprehensive HR services to regions or divisions, as well as those that serve in the capacity of a “second” or an “Assistant HRM,” be given additional scrutiny and that actions on these positions be deferred until Phase Two. The LMC concurred. As a result, DOP staff will audit these positions to develop accurate position information covering the study period. This information will be used to draft Phase Two class specifications and, if appropriate, to recommend revisions to the Human Resource Specialist series to incorporate all or some of the audited work.

The Working Group deferred its review of the consultant’s report until after the implementation of the Phase I class specifications on September 16; work on the Human Resource Managers, Personnel Managers, Human Resource Officer, Payroll Manager, and Retirement & Benefits Manager will be completed at a later date.

The Director approved the final class specifications. The following job classes and series are established:

Human Resource Assistant

Human Resource Technician I, II, III
Payroll Supervisor
Payroll Specialist I, II, III
AMHS Dispatcher
Human Resource Specialist I, II, III
Labor Relations Analyst I, II, III, IV

The interview teams reviewed the PDs, interview notes, and any additional information in conjunction with the final class specifications and recommended individual position allocations.

SCOPE

The study was limited to positions allocated to Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. Positions allocated to job classes shared with other bargaining units were not included (i.e. Analyst Programmers). Departments were invited to submit PDs of individual clerical positions that they believed might perform work properly allocated to a HR class.

SERIES CONCEPTS

Labor Relations Analyst I – IV is a professional series in which incumbents research, analyze and make recommendations regarding collective bargaining issues and processes from a statewide perspective rather than on behalf of an operating agency, and advise and assist line managers, supervisors and human resources staff on a variety of collective bargaining issues and processes. Positions in the series present cases in arbitration, represent the State at Alaska Labor Relations Agency hearings, and serve as chief spokesperson at contract negotiations.

Labor Relations Analyst I is the first working level of professional labor relations work. Positions provide detailed, analytical evaluations of less complex and less controversial labor relations issues, assist agency managers and human resource staff to dispose of grievances at the lowest possible level, and assist Labor Relations Analysts II and III with arbitration, Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA) hearings and negotiations. Incumbents are assigned a complaint, grievance and evaluation appeal caseload that contains a full range of issues, but is limited to disputes of moderate complexity. Assignments require in-depth research, detailed and logical analysis of issues, and clear and persuasive writing. Unique, critical, or controversial issues are referred to a supervisor or higher level Analyst for review or determination before a final course of action is selected. Work performed by employees in this series is expected to be progressively responsible and complex. Tasks normally performed by a Labor Relations Analyst II, such as arbitration advocacy, are assigned at this level for developmental purposes.

Labor Relations Analysts II is the journey level of professional labor relations work. Under general supervision incumbents perform the full range of journey level collective bargaining activities by serving as the State's principal labor relations advisor for assigned grievance and complaint cases; advocating the State's position in any but the most complicated arbitration or Alaska Labor Relations Agency cases; and participating in contract negotiations as a team member or as chief spokesperson in any but the most complicated or sensitive negotiations.

Labor Relations Analyst III is the advanced level of professional labor relations work. Under general direction, Labor Relations Analysts III are assigned the regular and recurring responsibility to serve as the employer's chief spokesperson for one or more major bargaining units. They also represent the State at rights and interest arbitration and Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA) hearings on the most complex or controversial issues where the disputes have a substantial impact on large-scale and important activities of state agencies, significant political implications, large financial liabilities, or challenge the authority of the arbitrator. Incumbents function with significant independence and authority to commit the state to a course of action or to establish binding precedent for future action affecting expenditures, policies, and procedures during both negotiations and the administration of labor agreements. The consequence of error may substantially increase costs for state operations or cause significant political damage to principals. Labor Relations Analysts III may lead a project or work team of Labor Relations Analysts I and II.

Labor Relations Analyst IV is the expert, supervisory level of labor relations work. This is a single position job class with substantial supervisory responsibility for the exercise of independent judgement in appointing, promoting, transferring, suspending, or discharging subordinates. Under general direction, the incumbent directs and coordinates the activities of a unit of Labor Relations Analysts performing the full range of collective bargaining activities. The position serves as the employer's chief spokesperson for one or more major bargaining units and represents the State at rights or interest arbitration or Alaska Labor Relations Agency hearings on the most complex or controversial issues where the disputes have a substantial impact on large-scale and important activities of state agencies, significant political implications, large financial liabilities, or challenge the authority of the arbitrator.

Incumbents function with significant independence and authority to commit the state to a course of action or to establish binding precedent for future action affecting expenditures, policies, and procedures during both negotiations and the administration of labor agreements. The consequence of error may significantly increase costs for state operations or cause significant political damage to principals.

ANALYSIS

The LMC identified discrepancies between the centralized (Division of Personnel) and departments in access to particular job classes as an issue to be reviewed in the study. This concern arose from the increase in functions delegated to departments in recent years and in specifications which reserved certain job classes for the exclusive use of the central agency. The Working Group considered the full range of labor relations functions and initially considered including that work within the general series of Human Resource Specialist; however, the group eventually concluded that a separate body of work existed which distinguished some positions from all others involved in this functional area. The work characteristic of the Labor Relations Analyst series was previously described in the Labor Relations Specialist series.

Positions in the Labor Relations Analyst series are distinguished by the delegation of authority to represent the State at rights and interest arbitration, to represent the State before the Alaska Labor Relations Agency, and to serve as chief spokesperson in contract negotiations. Allocation

to this series is contingent upon the assignment of class controlling work, which at present is limited to certain positions in the Department of Administration's Division of Personnel. In the event these functions are delegated out, classification of department positions to the Labor Relations Analyst series may become appropriate. The new series incorporates the work previously included in the Labor Relations Specialist series.

The complexity and impact of the assignment and the level of supervisory responsibility distinguish levels within the series. At the entry level (LRA I) positions investigate and respond to the full range of formal grievances and complaints on behalf of the Commissioner of Administration. This is similar to the scope of work performed at this level by the positions allocated to the Human Resource Specialist II. LRA I positions also assist and present cases at arbitration and assist in negotiations as a training device for advancement to the LRA II level. This is the distinguishing characteristic separating the LRA I from the HRS II. LRA II is the journey level of the series at which incumbents carry a full grievance caseload and are expected to present all but the most complex or controversial cases at arbitration. The advanced levels of the series are responsible for increasingly complex assignments in arbitration advocacy and contract negotiation. LRA IV is the full supervisory level of the series.

SALARY ANALYSIS

In accord with the principal of internal alignment, the salary ranges for the Labor Relations Analyst series were compared to professional and administrative classes in the Accounting and Fiscal family (P12XX), Statistics and Research Analysis family (P17XX), General Administrative family (P19XX), Labor and Employment Services family (P46XX), Legal family (P71XX), the Law Enforcement family (P77XX). Within the Personnel and Employee Relations family (P14XX) this series was compared with the advanced levels of the Human Resource Specialist series and the Program Budget Manager.

Labor Relations Analyst I is the entry level of the professional series; incumbents carry a full grievance load, assist with negotiations, and are trained to independently present cases at arbitration or before the Alaska Labor Relations Agency. The most comparable job classes include Associate Attorney (R17), Attorney I (R18), Associate Attorney II (R19), and Appeals Referee I (R17). These are entry-level classes within a legal or quasi-judicial professional field. Positions work under the supervision of fully proficient and experienced practitioners. Incumbents conduct research, fact-finding, prepare for hearings, assist higher level positions with case preparation and presentation, and are trained to independently assume the advanced level work. The grievance or complaint investigation and response duties at this level are directly comparable to those performed by the Human Resource Specialists II in the departments. Allocation to salary range 18 is appropriate.

Labor Relations Analyst II is the journey level of the series; incumbents carry a full grievance load, serve as spokesperson at contract negotiations, and independently present all but the most complex or controversial cases at arbitration or before the Alaska Labor Relations Agency. The most comparable job classes include Associate Attorney II (R19), Appeals Referee II (R19), Attorney II (R20), and Investigator IV (R20). These are journey-level classes within an administrative or professional field in which positions work independently, represent the state in hearing and prepare appeals, write legal briefs or hearing decisions, and accomplish difficult and

complex investigations. Within the Employees and Labor Relations family (P14XX) Labor Relations Analysts are comparable to the Human Resource Specialists III who serve as a subject matter expert in a major functional area. Given the independence and additional advocacy delegations in arbitration and contract negotiations, assignment at two ranges above the Labor Relations Analyst I is consistent with the State's pay plan. Allocation to salary range 20 is appropriate.

Labor Relations Analyst III is the advanced level of the series; incumbents perform the full range of complex collective bargaining assignments as chief spokesperson for major contract negotiations and serve as the State's advocate at the most complicated rights and interest arbitration hearings. Comparable classes include Investigator IV (R20), Attorney II (R20), Research Analyst IV (R21), Attorney III (R21), Hearing Officer (R21), and Worker's Compensation Hearing Officer (R21). These are advanced level classes within an administrative or professional field in which positions: handle the difficult and complex investigations, cases, and hearings; serve as a mentor or assist in training lower level staff; represent the state before judicial and quasi-judicial panels; and conduct research and serve as staff advisors to management on issues with substantial financial impact upon the State. Given the increased complexity of case assignments and the delegation to serve as spokesperson for major contract negotiations, assignment at one range above the Labor Relations Analyst II is consistent with the State's pay plan. Allocation to salary range 21 is appropriate.

Labor Relations Analyst IV is the supervisory level of the series reporting to either the Division Director or the Labor Relations Manager. The most comparable classes include the Appeals Referee (R21), Worker's Compensation Hearing Officer (R21), Accountant V (R22), Program Budget Manager (R22), and Labor Relations Manager (R23). These are among the highest level supervisory or management classes. Positions direct the most complex and extensive cases and provide advice and guidance to appointed officials and boards. Given the lead supervisory duties assigned this position and responsibility to coordinate and implement the State's overall collective bargaining policy, assignment at one range above the Labor Relations Analyst III is consistent with the State's pay plan. Allocation to salary range 22 is appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The professional duties involved in the investigation of formal grievances and complaints, the delegated authority to represent the State at rights and interest arbitration, the delegated authority to represent the State before the Alaska Labor Relations Agency, and the delegated authority to serve as chief spokesperson at contract negotiations are appropriately grouped into a separate job series. The specific delegations distinguish this series from the general professional series of Human Resource Specialists. Four distinct levels of work were identified: entry, journey, advanced, and expert/supervisory. The class specifications accurately define and distinguish the work of the series, allow for career progression, and establish minimum qualifications that will provide a broad pool of qualified applicants. Labor Relations Analysts I, II, III and IV are assigned to salary ranges 18, 20, 21 and 22 respectively.

The attached class specifications are established September 16, 2002, and are effective retroactively to September 1, 2001, pursuant to LOA 01-KK-048 as amended.

Attachments